

JFK Prober Regrets Lack Of CIA Data

By George Lardner Jr.

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The executive director of the White House commission that investigated the CIA said yesterday that relevant evidence concerning CIA efforts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro was improperly withheld from the Warren Commission inquiry into President Kennedy's assassination.

David W. Belin, who also served as a staff lawyer on the Warren Commission, told a House subcommittee that the information not only should have been supplied to that panel but would probably have triggered "an even broader investigation" of Kennedy's 1963 murder than was actually undertaken.

One of the most outspoken defenders of the Warren Commission's findings, Belin said he is still convinced that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, killed the President, but Belin indicated that he also feels there should have been a more thorough investigation of possible Cuban connections.

There has been speculation ranging all the way from the charge that Kennedy was killed in retaliation for CIA plotting against Castro to the allegation that Oswald was the dupe of anti-Castro Cuban exiles angry at Kennedy over the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion.

Under questioning by Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) at a House government operations subcommittee hearing, Belin called the evidence of CIA involvement in assassination plots against foreign leaders—particularly Castro, "a very, very sordid chapter in American history" that should have been made public months ago.

As executive director of the CIA investigating commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller, Belin pointed out that the commission's vice chairman, C. Douglas Dillon,

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stated publicly at one point that its report would include a section on CIA assassination schemes.

Subsequently, however, Belin said, it was decided "not to release those documents."

A Des Moines attorney, Belin emphasized that he was not stating that "Castro was involved" in the Kennedy assassination in any way. But he said he feels evidence of CIA plotting against the Cuban premier "should have been made available to the Warren Commission."

The late CIA Director Allen W. Dulles, who served on the Warren Commission, obviously knew about the anti-Castro scheming, Belin agreed, but he said he has been unable to find anyone else connected with the commission who was told about it.

Belin also said he feels all the Warren Commission documents now in the custody of the National Archives should be made public.

As far as the Warren Commission's work is concerned, Belin said, "I believe the public's right to know far overrides what might be considered breaches of national security."

National archivist James B. Rhoads admitted that the Warren Commission itself never had the proper authority to classify documents to begin with. He maintained that this was simply an oversight in an executive order that President Johnson issued, but Abzug said repeatedly that she saw no basis for secrecy for many documents that the commission "classified illegally."

Rhoads promised a special review of the Warren Commission records still under seal—about 10 per cent of the total.

The archives' expert in charge of JFK assassination records, Marion Johnson, acknowledged at another point that "some of them are missing," but said he had no complete catalogue of the records that have somehow disappeared.